



New Directions, September 2026 Newsletter



Ken from Avila Day Service recently displayed his creative work in an Art Exhibition. See more about this on page 6!



Josh and Carmel from Elvira had reason to celebrate after receiving Certs for a Hospitality Skills Course.



Naomi from Crossroads has been sustainable and helping the planet recently...



Jenny Bagnall from Avoca had reason to celebrate this month, see more photos on page 26!

This month we explore the ninth pillar which underpins New Directions, we look at **‘Support for Accessing Vocational Training and Work Opportunities’**.

You can access work opportunities in Ireland through official public employment services, private job boards, and local community networks.

Public Employment Services;

- **JobsIreland:** Here you can search national vacancies and upload your CV using your MyGovID via JobsIreland.
- **Intreo:** Allows you to access state employment support, training schemes, and work experience programmes like the Work Placement Experience Programme.
- **Publicjobs.ie:** A website where you can apply for civil service, healthcare, and public sector roles via the Public Appointments Scheme.

Job Search Platforms and Networks;

- **Noticeboards:** Browse the noticeboards in large supermarkets or in your local library.
- **Career Guidance:** Explore career paths and education options using a CareersPortal.
- **Local Support:** Check community resources such as Citizens Information.

Meet the Staff Member

Hi Everyone, I joined the service in January 2001 and have had the privilege of working across a variety of areas, including residential services, supported living, children's services, respite, and now day services. I am currently the Centre Supervisor for Uaisle Day Service in Ballyfermot, where I am passionate about supporting older persons to live fulfilling lives through active citizenship, meaningful participation, and positive retirement planning.

Throughout my career, I have valued the opportunity to learn from the people we support, their families, and the dedicated teams I have worked alongside every day.



Outside of work, I enjoy being creative through art, particularly cartoon drawing, growing some of my own vegetables, and listening to a good podcast whenever I get the chance.

Thank you for taking the time to read a little piece about me. I look forward to continuing to learn, connect, and contribute as part of the New Directions journey.

Las Granadas Day Service



Janet who attends Las Granadas Day Service in Tallaght has been actively involved in the community recently. Janet visited Trinity College in the city centre with her friends and participated in a tour of the college and their magnificent grounds. Janet also enjoyed her lunch at Trinity as the weather was fantastic. Janet travelled to Bluebell Community Centre to participate in a music session with her friends. She used the Luas to travel there and back, and staff could see a big smile on her face. These recent outings are huge achievements for her. Well done Janet, we cannot wait to hear more about your journey in the future.



Avila Day Service



Ken Shanahan successfully planned, created, bought and finalised his Art work to participate in the Double Take Art Studio Exhibition 2026. This truly was a great morning for all of Avila's Art students, their families and friends. Ken was working hard on the project, picking and purchasing frames ahead of the Exhibition at Red Rua in Tallaght.





A trip to the Guinness Storehouse was organised for Avila Day Service. David, Gary, Ian, Jennifer, Joe, Keith, Kevin and Lauren attended the outing and had a fantastic day that was enjoyed by all. Individuals were given the opportunity to attend the trip, which provided a wonderful chance to explore and learn about an important part of Ireland's history and culture in the heart of Dublin. Throughout the visit, the group enjoyed discovering the story of Guinness, learning about the brewing process, and exploring the interactive exhibits within the Storehouse. For Jennifer, attending the Guinness Storehouse was particularly meaningful as it linked to one of her personal goals. Jennifer's father previously worked for Guinness, and she was delighted to learn more about the company and its history. This made the experience especially enjoyable and relevant for her. Everyone had the opportunity to enjoy a freshly poured Guinness or soft drink of their choice in the Gravity Bar while taking in the spectacular panoramic views of Dublin city.

This was a highlight of the day for many attendees. On the journey home, the group stopped for lunch together, which was a lovely way to finish such a wonderful day. The outing was filled with laughter, excitement, and happiness, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed spending time together. Several service users commented that it was a great day and expressed their wish to visit again in the future. The trip provided many opportunities to develop and practice important life skills, including social skills, travel skills, community participation, communication, and decision-making. These skills were essential throughout the day and helped ensure that everyone could actively participate in and enjoy the experience. Karen and Sinéad supported the service users throughout the trip, ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to take part and make the most of the experience.



**Staying healthy
in autumn and
winter.**



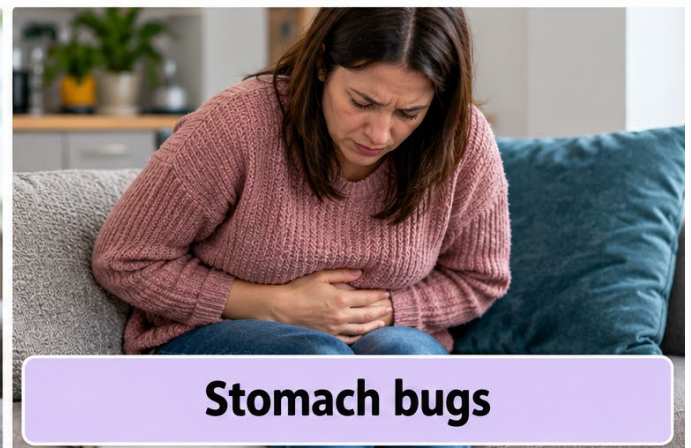
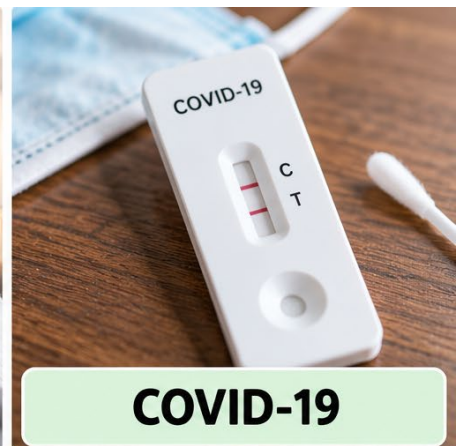
**When the
weather gets
colder, more
people can get
sick.**

What are winter bugs?



Winter bugs are illnesses that can spread from one person to another.

They include:



How might I feel?



You may have a cough.



You may have a runny or blocked nose.



You may have a sore throat or headache.

Other signs you may be sick



You might have a high temperature.



You may feel tired or achy.



You may feel sick or have diarrhoea or vomiting.

If you feel unwell



Tell someone you trust.



You may need to stay at home.



Staying at home can help stop other people from getting sick.

Wash your hands



Wash your hands often with soap and water.



Wash away germs

Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.



Wash them when they are dirty.



Wash your hands when they are dirty.



Wash between your fingers.

Wash around your thumbs.

CATCH IT

Cough or sneeze into
a tissue or your elbow.



CATCH IT

Cough or
sneeze into a
tissue or your
elbow.

BIN IT



Put the tissue
in the bin.



BIN IT

Put the tissue in
the bin.

KILL IT



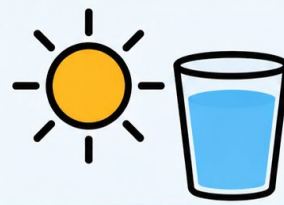
Wash your
hands.



KILL IT

Wash your
hands.

**Drink water
during the day.**



**Drinking enough water helps
your body stay healthy.**

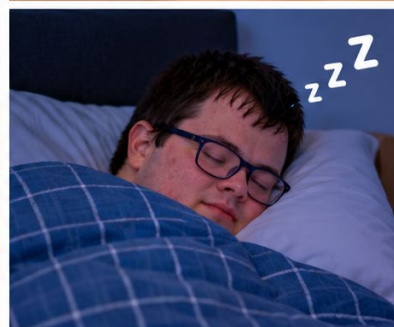
**Your body
needs rest.**



**Try to go to bed
at a regular time.**



**Try to get enough
sleep each night.**



Flu vaccine



**Flu can make
some people
very sick.**

**The flu vaccine
can help protect
you from flu.**



FLU VACCINE DATES



STAFF

10th November



RESIDENTS

11th November



Oakley Park House

Flu vaccine



?

If you have a question about the flu vaccine, talk to Katie Fogarty.



?

Consent form



Katie can also give you a consent form.

Cairde Day Service



This week Cairde began their Music Therapy sessions with Jennie, launching *Making Music with Jennie* a personalised Music and Wellbeing Programme created for residential and day services supporting children and adults with intellectual disabilities across Kildare and Dublin.

As both a musician and educator, Jennie focuses on meaningful musical experiences rather than entertainment, promoting wellbeing, communication, confidence, sensory engagement and social connection.

Each programme starts with a complimentary consultation to understand every individual's interests, abilities, communication style and support goals. From there, Jennie develops a tailored programme and delivers engaging weekly group sessions using her own instruments, sensory materials and specialised equipment, creating an inclusive and uplifting musical space for all. We are very much looking forward to working with Jennie over the next six weeks. If anyone would like more information about this for your own location then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Elvira Day Service

During Friday 11th of September, 11 individuals from Elvira attended a wonderful performance as part of The Fringe Festival, where the main theme was Access, Affordability, and Inclusion!

Service Users were extremely welcomed and the Fringe team have educated the group on offers for other Matinee shows throughout the Autumn/Winter and also recommended evening shows.



Rachel Coss was invited on stage to take part in the production and this added to the excitement and overall experience for all those in attendance. The group then enjoyed a lunch outing and discussed the show as well as talked about flyers for any upcoming shows.





A group of potential students attended an Open Day in Crumlin College on Captain's Road and met with Community Education Development Officer Eoin O'Brien. Eoin gave the Elvira group a tour and made everyone feel welcome. He also said he would do his very best to facilitate all of the classes which the group expressed an interest in.



A group from Elvira attended Tai Chi, a Martial Arts exercise Class. They have been offered 3 tester classes to sample. The group expressed this year that they wanted to try new and meaningful things. Staff member Erika from Elvira said 'we are all about choice and supporting individuals to have a meaningful day, week, month and year'. Thank you Erika for the wonderful write up and photos.

Crossroads Day Service



Naomi has a strong interest in shredding paper, and she wanted to explore more ways of recycling and caring for the environment. Building on this interest, she chose to set a personal goal of learning more about the importance of recycling and finding practical ways she could contribute to protecting the environment. Naomi decided to collect used batteries from other day centres and encouraged others to recycle them appropriately. Naomi showed great enthusiasm, motivation, and ownership of her goal, successfully collecting five large blue boxes of used batteries and returning them to the recycling depot. Well done Naomi on doing your part in protecting our environment!

Reach Day Service

Diana, together with support from Nicola, hosted a morning ISL Nursery Rhymes session in the local library in Maynooth. The session provided a welcoming and inclusive opportunity for young children to enjoy nursery rhymes and stories through Irish Sign Language (ISL). It was a great success, with the session creating a fun, positive, and inclusive environment where the children could learn and develop an awareness of ISL through music, rhymes, and interaction.



Windmill Day Service



The men and women of windmill enjoyed a varied programme of activities that promoted social engagement, creativity, community participation, and life skills development. The group shared an outdoor breakfast together in Windmill, took part in arts and crafts activities including painting and temporary tattoo art, engaged in gardening-related tasks, and also visited The Square in Tallaght.

The group also visited St. Stephen's Green and the local community for recycling, refreshments, and explored cultural and historical exhibits. These activities encouraged communication, independence, confidence, creativity and meaningful social interaction while providing enjoyable opportunities for learning and personal development.



Avoca Day Service



Jenny Bagnall from Avoca Day Service was able to celebrate her 49th birthday with her mom, friends and staff on location on September 9th 2026. Everyone in Avoca wants to wish Jenny a massive Happy Birthday, we hope you enjoyed the celebrations.

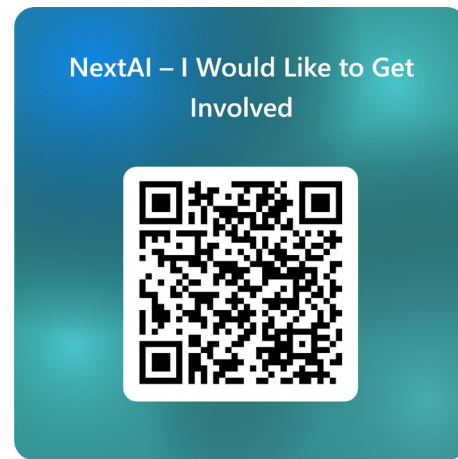
DigiCoach Programme – Growing Across Our Services

Thanks to funding from Rethink Ireland and CREATE, the DigiCoach Programme continues to grow. We are delighted that four more paid DigiCoaches will join the programme next month, creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to use their digital skills in meaningful paid roles.

Over the next year, we plan to grow to a total of 30 paid DigiCoaches. This will include two DigiCoaches from North East Services and two from Dublin South East, helping us expand the programme across Saint John of God Community Services and the six other organisations we have introduced DigiCoaching to.

We are also excited that DigiCoach will be part of activities connected with the European Presidency next month, giving DigiCoaches an opportunity to share their work and experience with a wider audience. We look forward to continuing to grow DigiCoach and, most importantly, creating more opportunities for people with lived experience to develop their skills, support others and access paid employment. The DigiCoaches will be heading out to each Day Service in Dublin and Kildare between October and March Next Year with a new iPad for each location. They will support teams in digital inclusion, from using built-in accessibility to supporting staff use iplanit.





The Digital Assistive Technology (DAT) Team in Liffey Services has received €400,000 in European funding for a new project called NextAI. NextAI will explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support people with intellectual disabilities in learning, working, and becoming more independent.

The DAT Team wrote the project and will lead it, working with partners atempo, AIAS Bologna, TU Dublin, AAATE and Fundación San Juan de Dios. DigiCoaches will be hired throughout the project. They will help test ideas, share their experiences and make sure AI is easy to understand, safe and useful.

NextAI will explore how AI can help people understand information, learn new skills and access training and work opportunities.

The project will run from December 2026 to November 2028. If you are interested in learning more, please fill out the info form.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/HwR9NTD5kG>



Leadership in Action

Claire Savage and Patrick Fitzgerald with Shelly Breslin are representing St John of God Community Services at the Social Inclusion Conference in Marseille, France.

The conference brings together people from across Europe to talk about inclusion, participation and how people can have more choice and control in their lives.

Claire and Patrick will take part in a session called **“Shaping the Future: Leadership by People with Lived Experience.”**

They will share examples of leadership and participation from Saint John of God Community Services.

This is a great opportunity for Patrick to share his own experience and ideas with an international audience.

Claire and Patrick will also learn about work happening in other European countries and bring new ideas home.

Their participation shows that people with lived experience can be leaders, speakers and representatives and can help shape services for the future.

Check out the Conference [**Programme | Soziale Inklusion**](#)





The ****SONGS Project**** is really starting to take shape! Our musicians have now

completed their fourth session with composer Karen Power. They have been working together, experimenting with different sounds, instruments and ideas. The group is working hard to discover their own sound and explore how their different musical styles can come together to create something new.

Over the coming sessions, these sounds and ideas will begin to gel together into a new song, created by the musicians themselves. It has been exciting to see everyone sharing ideas, trying new things and learning from each other. There is no set idea of what the final song should sound like the musicians are creating it together. This is what SONGS is all about: creativity, collaboration, developing new skills and giving people the opportunity to have their own voice heard through music.

We can't wait to hear what they create!



Thank You for Reading...

One last thing, the New Directions Online Engage sessions are now pre-recorded and the link to watch the September 2026 recording, filmed in Cookstown with our ADM Coordinator Amy Quinn, is here; [Online Engage September 2026](#)



Could everyone please continue to send all your good news stories into me, we love to celebrate all the successes happening across Liffey Region's Day Services. Thank You.

Get in touch

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**st John
of God** 
Community Services

This booklet about stories linked to New Directions information was made by Donna Hughes.